



State of Connecticut
House Of Representatives

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5403

March 2, 2016

Dear Sen. Coleman, Rep. Tong, Sen. Kissel, Rep. Rebimbas, and esteemed members of the Committee,

I write today in strong support of **H.B. No. 5403 AN ACT INCREASING PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS IN CROSSWALKS AND FAILURE TO EXERCISE DUE CARE TO AVOID HITTING A PEDESTRIAN OR CYCLIST.**

As a legislature, we continually work to advance our economic competitiveness, protect our environment and improve the health and safety of our residents. Congestion on our roadways, increasing healthcare costs and continuing climate concerns impact our economy and well-being and turn our focus to getting people out of their single occupancy vehicles and on their feet, their bikes, the bus and the train. This bill is another step in the right direction as we seek to improve our residents' ability to safely choose to walk or bike to work and school. The creation of walkable, livable communities must be supported by a shift in the culture and attitude towards our vulnerable users, our pedestrians and cyclists.

Advocates for active transportation address **infrastructure, education and enforcement**. Sidewalks, properly marked crosswalks, designated bike lanes and all infrastructure improvements that keep our pedestrians and bicyclists safe are necessary if we want our residents to choose active transportation. Likewise, it is essential that we educate all users to make certain they are aware of the rules of the road and can safely abide by Connecticut law. Enforcement of the law is an essential ingredient. Lacking sufficient enforcement mechanisms, the law cannot affect the kind of cultural and behavioral shifts needed. HB 5403 will increase the penalties for vehicles that do not yield to those in a cross walk or "exercise due care to avoid colliding with a pedestrian or cyclist."

Earlier this week my own cousin was killed when a vehicle struck him. He was a pedestrian. I have constituents who have been struck while riding their bicycle on the roadway. I hear regularly from residents that they would choose to walk and bike more often if they felt it was safe for them to do so.

Bike Walk CT has submitted excellent testimony and I hope you will have the opportunity to review it. I want to highlight some CT Crash Data statistics they cite. From 2006 – 2012, 10,793 individuals were either injured or killed as they biked or walked in Connecticut. 259 of those were pedestrian deaths and 36 were cyclist fatalities. These are deaths and injuries we can prevent through changes in our behavior, enforcement, infrastructure and education.

Please support HB 5403 and pay close attention to the pedestrians and cyclists you encounter on the road every day.